



**CAFTA FACTS**  
**The President is Gutting Funds**  
**For International Labor Assistance**

**Prepared by the Office of Congressman Sherrod Brown**

Included in the president's 2006 Budget is a request for a mere \$12 million for the Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). ILAB funds technical assistance on labor standards. The repeated short-funding requests reveal the administration's lack of commitment to improve labor conditions.

The numbers don't lie, and they certainly indicate the Bush administrations intentions. Overall U.S. labor rights funding to the region plummeted 43 percent between 2003 and 2004.

The most telling sign of the administration's lack of commitment to labor rights assistance is their 2006 budget calls for Department of Labor's International Labor Affairs Bureau's (ILAB) budget to be gutted by an astounding 87 percent in real terms from 2005.

This continues the Bush administration's trend of slashing ILAB - - while the agency was funded at \$148 million in 2001, the 2006 request is a mere \$12 million.

That's about enough to maintain current staff, but terminates most U.S. assistance to the International Labor Organization and other labor programs.

While the administration is trying to sell CAFTA to Congress on the strength of its labor rights assistance in the region, their record shows where their real priorities lie.

Funds are increased temporarily to sell a trade agreement and then slashed the next year; financing is diverted away from unions, organizations with expertise in labor rights, and programs to improve labor standards; and Congress is then asked to dismantle our global labor assistance programs.

To support its flawed Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), the administration talks a big game on international labor but they can't claim to be serious about improving labor conditions in CAFTA nations when they don't even ask for any funding to do so.

Don't let the rhetoric fool you, the dollar signs tell the real story. The administration can't be serious about labor rights when it isn't serious about program funding.

The president is on the wrong track. Congress must demand a smarter trade deal than CAFTA.